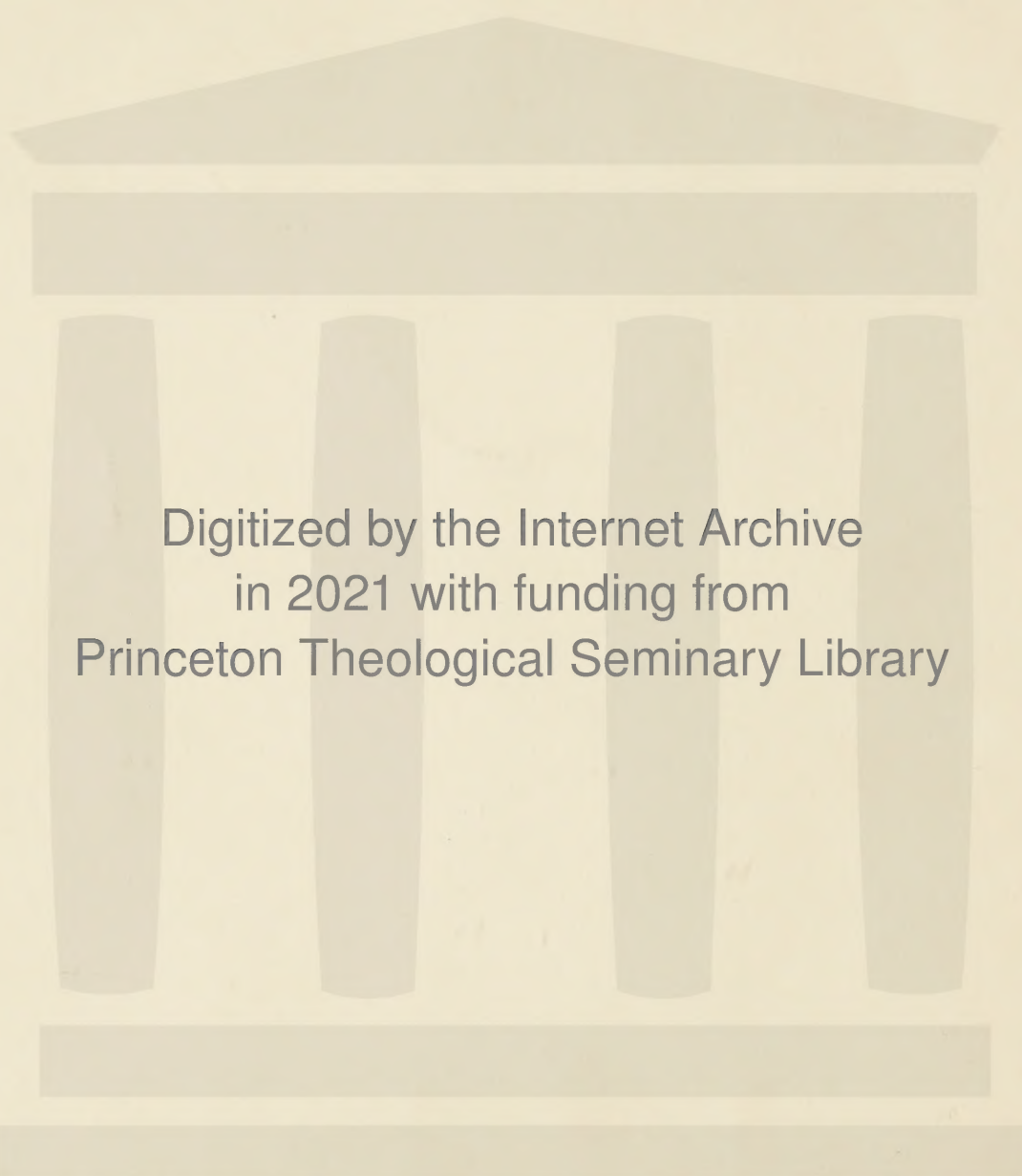


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Princeton Theological Review

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that the light of God's truth may shine bright and increase

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*Stand at the crossroads and look
Ask for the old paths, where the good way is
Walk in it, and find rest for your souls*

JEREMIAH 6:16

The Princeton Theological Review

Dedicated to the Rev. Dr. Charles Hodge (1797-1878)

Professor of Systematic Theology, Princeton Theological Seminary

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The Charles Hodge Society

The Theological Students' Fellowship

Letters to the Editor

Thanks for letting me see the good monster at Princeton. . .
Good luck in the crucial enterprise of educating the
American mind in reasons for the faith!

Under the Mercy,
Peter Kreeft
Professor of Philosophy
Boston College

Thank you for the *Princeton Review*. All of us who value
the Reformed faith are pleased to see the Princeton tradition
renewed through your efforts. You follow in a great
succession of thinking believers.

John H. Leith
Union Theological Seminary
Richmond, Virginia

I simply wanted you to know how delighted we are here in
Scotland to hear of the revival of the *Princeton Theological
Review* and we want to wish you every success and
encouragement in your endeavour.

With Warm Christian Greetings,
Ian H. Murray
Editorial Director
Banner of Truth

I was recently given a copy of your publication. As an
alumnus of Princeton Seminary, I must say that I was
delighted to see your work in seeking to continue the great
theological tradition of Princeton Seminary. I trust the
Princeton Theological Review, now reborn, will continue
well into the future. May the Lord be with you in all your
efforts.

In Christ,
Paul Leggett, Ph.D.

Many thanks for the *Princeton Theological Review*. I found
the articles relevant, Biblical, Reformed in perspective, as
well as well-written and informative. If any further editions
of the publication will be coming out, then I would like to
be on the mailing list.

Grace and Peace,
Dr. Robert B. Wills
Pastor Emeritus
Bethesda Presbyterian Church

Late Night Thoughts While Reading Charles Hodge

John W. Stewart

*The following is a letter to the editors from Dr. John
Stewart, Ashenfelter Associate Professor of Ministry and
Evangelism at Princeton Theological Seminary. Dr.
Stewart's doctoral dissertation, entitled "A Tethered
Theology," dealt primarily with the nineteenth century
Princeton theologians. He is also in the process of
organizing a symposium to be held on the occasion of
Charles Hodge's two hundredth birthday in 1997. We
reproduce the letter in its entirety and welcome responses
from our readers.*

—the Editors

I've been asked so many times what I think about the
recent efforts on our seminary's campus to revisit and revive
the theological tradition of Charles Hodge that I'm looking
for places to hide, especially at lunch time at Mackay. But I
cannot much longer duck the sometimes barbed, sometimes
wistful, sometimes naive questions. So, as the English say,
it is time to have a go at it.

I first encountered Hodge's writings in a serious way in
graduate school at the University of Michigan (in the
1960's) in a seminar in 19th century American thought.
Even then American historians such as Sydney Ahlstrom of
Yale detailed why Hodge (1797-1878) was such an
immensely influential theologian and churchman, perhaps
without peer in nineteenth century America. Certainly
within the American Reformed tradition, few if any could
match his training, influence, depth, range and sometimes
wit. At the urging of my professor (John Higham) I wrote a
seminar paper on Hodge's political theory in the *Biblical
Repertory and Princeton Review (BRPR)*, which,
incidentally, was the most common title of the journal he
edited for almost forty years. Skimming Hodge's many
articles (more than 140) in this journal (the predecessor to
our own *Theology Today*) revealed an impressive array of
issues that Hodge and his colleagues addressed in the middle
third of the nineteenth century. Here are just a few of the
topics Hodge wrote about in his widely read journal: *science*
(phrenology, the polygenesis controversy, geology, cultural
anthropology, technological advances, medicine); *philosophy*
(Kant, Reid, rationalism, romanticism); *biblical
studies* (Gesenius, Baur, Strauss, Tholuck, Hengstenberg,
the Tübingen school); *politics* (slavery, "just war" theories
and the Civil War, Lincoln and the War, Emancipation,
America and the Kingdom of God motif, Reconstruction
policies); *language and literature* (Locke, Bushnell,
Coleridge, the "metaphysical poets," Milton, Robert Burns,
novel reading); *ecclesiology* (leadership roles, the nature of
elders, ordination, Presbyterian splits in 1837 and 1860,
Thornwell's "passivity doctrine," Presbyterians and Vatican
I). And I have not yet mentioned his efforts at constructive
theology and his interminable polemics. His heated
discourse with E. A. Park about the future of American
Reformed theology raged on for nearly 200 pages over

*The editors wish to thank former editor Richard Gardiner
for making these letters available to the PTR*

several years. I lift these many and variegated topics to emphasize how little is currently understood about Hodge's thought—its scope, complexity and cogency. We don't even have a modern, critical biography that places Hodge in his own cultural, social, ecclesial and political environments.

With one notable exception (i.e., his *Way of Life*, 1841), Hodge was not so much an apologete as he was a polemical theologian. But, as I have written elsewhere, he was a *certain kind* of an American polemical theologian. For starters, Hodge was inveterately mediatorial. He searched for balance and symmetry in an age when theological energies were centripetal and ecclesial communities splintered. His quest for the *via media* reached to many facets of American life and thought. And he is quintessentially American in his manner and style. Arguably, no American Reformed theologian in the nineteenth century commented on as many theological, cultural, ecclesial and political issues as Hodge did. Thus, the *primary* place to address life and thought of Hodge is not through his *Systematic Theology* (1872-73) (*ST*), written when he was more than seventy years old, but in the lively, lucid and sometimes witty discourses of the *BRPR*. Beginning in 1825 and writing still in the 1870's, Hodge contributed more than 140 articles to this famed Victorian journal. Some of them were a 100 pages long. One wonders if he ever had a thought that he did not write down. Nevertheless, these articles demonstrate Hodge's mental agility in a richer way than the stiff, schematized *ST*. Despite their neglect by many scholars (especially theologians), these essays remain indispensable for a thorough understanding of Hodge: they locate him in a specific (antebellum American) cultural/political context; they reveal the symbiotic relationship of his Scottish philosophical assumptions and his understanding of Reformed theology; and they give body, character and controversy to his "Princeton paradigm."

By "Princeton paradigm" I mean Hodge's strenuous, Americanized reach to integrate (1) all human efforts at reasoned inquiry (science, theology, politics and ethics) *with* (2) all human behaviors and piety—and do so, *sub species aeternitatis*. (Or, as Puritans put it, "under the holy watchful Eye.") Enroute, all human thought and effort were to be submissive, *where appropriate*, to the Bible. Undergirding this encyclopedic quest was a philosophical commitment, namely, his unquestioned reliance on Scottish common sense realism, a metaphysics that was "bred in the

bones" at "Witherspoon's College." The "Princeton paradigm" subsequently drew on four nourishing sources: the Reformed tradition (especially nuanced by the Westminster Confessions); American Presbyterian communities; a Scottish-bred rationality; and the socio-political tradition of American Whiggery. These four constituents flowed congruently in Charles Hodge's mind.

This "Princeton paradigm" required a mutuality of faith, language, and reasoning that many in nineteenth century Protestant Christianity were realigning or jettisoning. In this sense, all Kantian-based thought has had trouble with Hodge's way of "thinking/doing" Christianity. For similar reasons, Hodge nurtured a life-long "love-hate" relationship with Schleiermacher and wrote about that dilemma often. He was not unqualified to do so. Hodge was one of the few (perhaps only) American theologians who actually studied with Schleiermacher in Berlin in the 1820's. However, in

ways later echoed by Karl Barth, Hodge never reconciled his "Princeton paradigm" with the philosophical Romanticism implicit in Schleiermacher. One American outcome of that alienation was Hodge's protracted and bitter dispute with John Nevin and the fascinating "Mercersburg Theology." On the other hand, Hodge would have understood Flannery O'Connor's dig at the "modernist impulse" in American liberal Protestantism when she wrote in her *Habits of Being*:

One of the effects of modern liberal Protestantism has been gradually to turn religion into poetry and therapy, to make truth vaguer and more and more relative, to banish intellectual distinctions, to

depend upon feeling instead of thought, and gradually to come to believe that God has no power, that he cannot communicate with us, cannot reveal himself to us, indeed has not done so and that religion is our own sweet invention.

Some, like Henry James Sr. in the 1840's, found the "Princeton paradigm" too myopic and taut; others (Hodge taught over 3,000 students) found it congenial and carried it to Presbyterians in the South, West and abroad, especially India and Korea. (According to our own Dr. Sam Moffett, the *ST* is still the primary textbook for theology in the one remaining seminary in North Korea!). Hodge's *ST* was used as a major text in several American seminaries as late as 1960.

By the end of his life, with the collapse of Scottish realism and with the Darwinist controversy and the inroads of biblical criticism pressing him hard, Hodge's grand and

Is the Scottish Common Sense Philosophy Dead?

Whereas the theological community by and large views the Scottish common sense philosophy as passé, contemporary analytic philosophers think otherwise. Consider the following comment by the epistemologist Keith Lehrer in his recent biography of Thomas Reid.

"How great a philosopher is [Thomas] Reid? The answer is best conveyed by a story concerning Roderick Chisholm. When Chisholm was a department chairperson at Brown he received a telephone call from a man saying that he was a busy man but had time to read one serious book in philosophy and wanted to do so. He said that he was not interested in entertainment but simply wanted to read a book with a greater amount of truth than any alternative. Chisholm, wishing to reflect on the matter, said the man should call back the next day, and he would give him his advice. The next day Chisholm recommended that the caller study Reid. It was a sound judgement."

—quoted in Keith Lehrer's book entitled *Thomas Reid*

gothic system teetered under the weight and burden of its own making. While it is easy to be tolerant when one believes nothing, Hodge believed too much. He did live in an era that trivialized absolutes but he tended to absolutize the trivial. He “died” for too many causes. Nevertheless, there is little or no understanding of Hodge until one wrestles with this “Princeton paradigm.” More specifically and critically, anyone who wants to revisit Hodge’s thought must, in my opinion, put high on their agenda how and why Scottish common sense realism permeated Hodge’s “Princeton paradigm.” Cornel West’s otherwise superb book, *The American Evasion of Philosophy*, simply bypasses the influence of Scottish Realism on the epistemological underpinnings and legacies of America antebellum philosophers and theologians like Hodge. That oft-repeated omission will have to be corrected if Hodge is to be reappraised.

Second, Hodge’s theological vision and enterprise required a Church, that is, a community that rightly remembers, faithfully cares and teaches, and lovingly disciplines. Hodge *always* did theology with an ear tilted toward the Church’s tradition and an eye focused on the modern Church’s well-being and responsibilities. Virtually every theological polemic he engaged (and they were legion) ended by referencing the Church, and especially the American Presbyterian churches. Not only has little been written about Hodge’s understanding of the Church but his ecclesial orientation also creates another hurdle for contemporary persons revisiting Hodge. In his day, Hodge had little truck with antebellum individualism and revivalism, à la Charles G. Finney. Modern privatization of religious commitments and discourse would be equally foreign to him. (The contemporary “Sheilaisms” would be utterly unbearable for Hodge!) The current practice in the American Protestantism, where we postmodern folks participate in ecclesial communities and espouse theologies on our own terms, would be incomprehensible to Hodge.

But there is more. Hodge’s ecclesiology extended to his understanding of America’s academic institutions, including Princeton Seminary. By mid-century he clearly sensed that theology pursued in academic settings differed fundamentally from those within ecclesial environments. He remembered often his first-hand encounters with the *Lehrernfreiheit* tradition of German universities and concluded that tradition was not appropriate for America’s church-related educational institutions, especially seminaries. He once chaired the committee at Princeton College to bring James McCosh as its president for the expressed purpose of countervailing the drift toward the modern, secular American university. In this sense, George Marsden’s recent work on American universities shows why Princeton College and Seminary until the last third of the 19th century resembled, surprisingly, the educational stance and proclivities of Catholic universities here and abroad. Hodge repeatedly recounted that fact that PTS itself was established earlier (1812) in part as an ecclesial protest against American colleges and universities.

In summary, any attempt to revisit Hodge’s theology will inevitably encounter a “high churchman,” whose schema for theological education began and ended with the Church. Many then, as now, found this ecclesial orientation

inhibiting if not unpalatable.

Third, there is the perennial issue of Hodge and the Bible. This issue was complex from the outset and its legacy in America is largely misunderstood. Currently, it is rife with diversity of scholarly opinion. To begin with, Hodge believed the Bible was to be poured over, guarded by, and interpreted within a community, namely the Church. Following that anti-modern requirement, there are the complex issues of his hermeneutics. Any attempt to resurrect Hodge’s biblical theology will have to address how and why he differed with the “tendencies” of modern biblical scholarship, especially the radical criticism emanating from post-Kantian Germany. As many have noted, Hodge was a biblical scholar before he was a systematic theologian. (He did not teach systematic theology at PTS until early 1840’s.) He anchored his Christian faith in the witness of the Scriptures and the Spirit’s promptings, not in the muddy bottoms of rational thought. With the possible exception of Moses Stuart at Andover Seminary, few antebellum American scholars were better trained in biblical studies than Hodge. But it is Hodge’s hermeneutics that call for critical contemporary reassessment. His interpretative assumptions, shaped during the first third of the nineteenth century at the Universities of Berlin and Halle as well as Princeton, ran increasingly counter to the “historicist drift” in academic biblical scholarship in mainline Protestant Christianity. For him, the Bible could not be approached exactly like any other document of antiquity.

Finally, if there is to be a critical reassessment of Hodge, I trust his “dark side” will not be neglected. It is often disconcerting for younger scholars to face up to tragic, inexplicable and unsavory dimensions of esteemed theologians and mentors. Luther endorsed the oppressor in the Peasant’s War and Calvin burned Servetus at the stake for not believing in the Trinity. American historians know it is not unusual to find among America’s social gospellers scandalous racial and anti-Semitic views. We should not, then, be surprised that Hodge had warts, though they rarely were of a personal moral nature.

While Hodge’s views about American slavery were complex and often misunderstood (even in his own day), they also remain historically unexamined. Nevertheless, he never fully appreciated, in my opinion, the moral repugnancy of America’s “peculiar institution” until the mid 1850’s. And he never acknowledged or comprehended the moral outrage of the abolitionists, even when those abolitionists were within the Presbyterian Church. For the most part, Hodge dismissed abolitionists, in or out of the church, as irresponsible and divisive. While voting for Frémont in 1856 (a surprising decision for a Whig and Presbyterian) and Lincoln in 1860, Hodge’s long defense of the Emancipation Proclamation was, finally, more political than moral. To his credit, Hodge refused to link American slavery with race. In fact, his views about race and racism were liberal for his own day, even though this aspect of Hodge begs for more fulsome examination. To complicate matters further, Hodge’s understanding of race inevitably requires a detour into Hodge’s appropriation antebellum American science.

And then there are his views about society and women. While advocating the “cult of domesticity” and acting as a

caring husband and tender father to eight children, he was totally inured to his own hierarchical views about social structures that unconsciously excluded women from public discourse and ecclesial offices. His opposition to women's suffrage, akin to that of Horace Bushnell, was coupled with his Whig-bred insensitivities to the values of "Jacksonians," whom he openly despised. And this list could go on.

I merely want to make the point that any reassessment of Hodge must not require canonizing him. His obvious faults should neither surprise nor inhibit. A small dose of the "hermeneutics of suspicion" is not unwarranted. We cannot simply resuscitate Hodge across the "ugly ditch of history." By our standards, he was liberal about some socio-political matters and downright reactionary about others. And this is not to deny or dismiss an abundance of Spirit-laden writings about the human faith journey and exhilarating expositions about God's grace in human life, such as the following: "... the exhibition of genuine Christian experience carries with it a convincing power so much higher than that which belongs to external testimony or logical argument."

Hodge was neither a paragon of virtue nor a theological curmudgeon. Consequently, all "procrustean beds" are inappropriate: we should not require Hodge to fit postmodern ideological views; neither should we genuflect as though he wrote the last word for American Reformed theology. History demands the former; Hodge himself, methinks, would insist on the latter.

In short, if we are going to revisit Hodge then let us revisit *all* of him. Better yet, let him speak for himself. He is rarely unclear. Repristinating Hodge's theological system, however, to play in the 21st century is another agenda altogether. ««

Christianity or Feminism?

Leslie Zeigler

Leslie Zeigler is professor emerita at Bangor Theological Seminary in Maine. During the academic year 1993-94 she was a visiting scholar at Princeton Theological Seminary. The following essay is her written account of a talk she gave before the Philosophy Discussion Group at Princeton Theological Seminary in December of 1993. Her talk was exceptionally well-attended by the seminary community (over 100). After speaking for approximately thirty minutes, she fielded questions for the next hour and a half. Though the Philosophy Discussion Group contacted both Princeton Seminary faculty and the Women's Center to present the positive case for feminist theology, unfortunately—through nobody's fault—this never materialized. The PTR is therefore publishing Professor Zeigler's piece with the hope prompting such a response. Prof. Zeigler permits the free distribution and copying of this essay. Moreover, she welcomes correspondence on the topic of this essay at the following address: 1030 Ohio Street, Apt. 20, Bangor, Maine 04401.

—The Editors

This is a vast and complicated subject. I will therefore try to present my position as briefly and simply as possible. My talk will essentially be an outline. Although I am well aware of the differences that exist among the various feminist writers, I shall limit myself to those issues on which they all essentially agree.

My thesis is quite simple. Most of the feminist theologians are giving us *not* the Christian faith, but a quite different religion. And, unfortunately, their efforts are being aided and abetted, as well as camouflaged by the churches themselves, particularly by the mainline Protestant churches. It is generally recognized today that these churches are in trouble—some would say in a mess. Basically the problem is one of uncertainty about their true function, accompanied by, and actually resulting from, a general theological disarray.

The feminists, of course, not only find this unnerved church (or unbelieving church) a very receptive medium for promoting their agenda, but their agenda also serves as a very effective catalyst for magnifying the theological disarray in the churches.

Of course, if one is going to speak of the Christian gospel being replaced by other gospels, one has to be clear about what one means by the Christian gospel. I am assuming at least the following perimeters must be acknowledged if one is to legitimately claim to be within the Christian tradition:

- (1) The authority of the Scriptures must be recognized. Without the Bible there can be no church.
- (2) The crucial significance of Jesus Christ must be recognized. The Christian faith stands or falls with God's self-revelation in Jesus of Nazareth.
- (3) This self-revelation is the basis for the requirement of speaking of the Trinity. If we wish to speak of the Christian God, and not some other god, we must be clear regarding the significance of the trinitarian name for God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Each of these statements could easily require a large volume for its development. I will only mention very briefly some of the basic issues involved. Each of these issues is very significant for understanding the theological crisis we face today, and the place of feminism in that crisis.

First, we need to consider a very important statement by John Calvin, a statement which has been repeated by generations of theologians since his time. He wrote that the word "God" is merely an empty term, flapping around in our brains, with no relation to reality, unless and until we attain some knowledge of God as he has made himself known, as he has imaged and designated himself [*Institutes* 1.13.2]. The term "God" is simply a general, abstract, empty term flapping around in our heads until it is given some definite referent—until we know *which* god we are talking about.

For the Christian, the Scriptures, the ancient creeds, and the historical Christian faith have been very clear that God has made himself known in his Son, Jesus Christ, and has designated himself through that event as the triune One—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

This historical faith rules out as inappropriate certain specific ways of referring to God. God is *not* to be referred to as some "spirit of love," or as a "concern for life."

Instead, the Christian faith affirms, along with the early members of the community which gave us the Scriptures, that Jesus is "Lord and Christ" [Acts 2:36]. This is both a theological and an historical statement. It says that God has done something for human beings at a particular time, in a particular place, and in a particular manner. It also involves the affirmation that as a Christian one understands oneself as a member of that particular historical community which has its origin in that particular act of God—the life, work, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.

This historical Christian faith does *not* begin with some phenomenon of the world and deduce God from it; it does *not* begin with some human value or activity and define God by elevating that value or activity to "divinity." Doing so is making God in our own image—concocting the God we want. The most common and insidious form of this is "role-model" theology—concocting a God who "is like me," and hence one to whom I can relate.

What's more, the historical Christian faith does *not* begin with the claim that the term "God" refers to the "Great Unknown," thereby implying that we must invent language for this Unknown—language that then can be changed at will since it was invented at will. Rather, we begin with the understanding that the Christian God has made himself known, identified himself in the biblical story—the story of redemption and the promise of salvation as given in the history of Israel and the event of Jesus Christ. And that particular God is specifically identified by the trinitarian name—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—which distinguishes him from all other gods. The Christian answer to the question *Who is God?* is simply *The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

But this gospel is under heavy attack today throughout the churches—particularly in the mainline Protestant churches. This attack appears under different banners, usually involving the promotion of some favorite cause, and the feminists are in the front lines in this respect. This God who tells Moses "I am Who I am," who enters into contingent relationships with human beings at particular times and in particular places, who approves of certain actions and not of others, has always been, to say the least, hard to live with. Human beings have always preferred gods for whom they can write the job descriptions themselves.

Scripture refers to these preferred gods as idols, and the author of Isaiah 44:9-20 gives us as clear a description as has ever been written of the idol maker and his idol. The craftsman cuts down a good, healthy tree, uses part of it for a fire to warm himself and to cook his dinner. Then from part of it he makes a graven image, to which he falls down and worships, praying—"Deliver me, for thou art my god!"

It's only at this point that Isaiah delivers his punchline, a punchline which is all too often overlooked. He tells us of the awesome power of the idol. That piece of wood which the craftsman himself has formed has deceived him—has led him astray to the point that he no longer recognizes it as his own creation. He has been blinded—blinded by his own creativity—so that he no longer recognizes that he is worshipping a delusion and hence is no longer able to deliver himself. He is unable to ask himself, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?"

Other Old Testament passages speak eloquently of the

idols as being useless, unable to do anything, unable to support their people; instead, having to be carried around and being a burden to them. But Isaiah puts his finger on a far more dangerous characteristic: they have the power to delude and deceive their makers.

The work of those attempting to craft a god of their own making, the god *we* want, and for whom *we* can provide the job description, is rampant within the church today. The feminists are not alone. They have built on a foundation provided by many others, but they lead the pack. The foundation on which feminists build is the widespread view that not just what Isaiah calls idols are made in the carpenter shop, but that *all* gods—including the Christian God—have their origin in somebody's carpenter shop.

One of the leading spokesmen for this view is Gordon Kaufman, professor at Harvard University. Kaufman argues that we need to recognize that Scripture, like all texts, is a culturally bound product of humanly created concepts. It does *not* refer to a Reality with Whom we must deal and Who deals with us—One with Whom we must come to terms. The central concepts of Scripture, the concepts of God and Jesus Christ, come out of an ancient carpenter shop. And while they may have served a useful function at one time, we need to recognize that they are now badly disintegrated—they are actually misleading and dangerous, destructive to human well-being today. So the task of today's theologians is to get back to the carpenter shop, to work on producing new images—new symbols that will serve a useful function for our time.

The feminists lead the work forces that have gotten busy in this way. Their carpenter shops are very energetically turning out replacements for the traditional "images" of God and Jesus Christ. The basic material being fashioned in their carpenter shops is not the wood of an oak tree, but something referred to as "women's experience," or more specifically, "women's experience in the struggle for liberation from oppression." The blue prints which guide the carpenters in their work carry the title "guidelines for promoting the full humanity of women." And the tools they employ are designed for the express purpose of liberating women from all forms of patriarchal oppression in both church and society.

Within this program "patriarchal" is the expression of ultimate evil. It encapsulates all forms of racism, classism, and above all, sexism. And in all these forms of oppression it is the men who dominate the women. Patriarchy permeates all of our social, political, cultural, and economic structures. All of the evils of these structures can ultimately be laid at its door. And for the feminist theologian the chief culprit in this respect is the Christian faith, with its Bible, its tradition, and its churches saturated with patriarchy.

The first hurdle to be overcome, then, is the Bible, since it is regarded as essentially and totally androcentric, and thoroughly pervaded by patriarchy. It was written by men living in a patriarchal society, has been interpreted throughout the centuries solely by men, and has been used in the church to subordinate women to men. Moreover, its influence is regarded as a major reason for the oppressive patriarchal structures and attitudes within modern Western society.

This understanding of the Bible leads to the obvious conclusion that what needs to be done is, if possible, to find something in it which will support the goal of promoting the full humanity of women, and to reject any aspect of it which denies or diminishes the full humanity of women. Any such passages cannot be true to the new image being fashioned. Or as Rosemary Ruether puts it, such passages "must *not* be presumed to reflect the divine will or the authentic nature of things." In this vein, Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza proposes that all such texts should *not* be retained in the lectionary, should *not* be proclaimed in Christian worship, and should *not* be used in catechism classes. Obviously, the authority of the Scriptures in any traditional sense has been rejected. They do not speak authoritatively *to us*—*we* control them.

The function of the feminist's carpenter shop is to turn out images which promote the full humanity of women, and the Scriptures are only useful to the extent that they serve that purpose, and, as just indicated, they don't do that very well. A number of shops have claimed to have found other sources, other traditions, that serve their purpose better.

According to the owners of these shops, the fundamental problem with the images produced in the ancient carpenter shops is that they were male. The traditional Christian God is a male God, and according to Mary Daly "If God is male, the male is God." The Bible's use of masculine language for the deity serves to legitimate the domination of women by men. It legitimates patriarchy. Hence the first order of business in the task of producing new images is to "feminize" God. And the solution would seem to be obvious—just turn out female images instead of male. Some shops are willing to settle for about a 50-50 ratio as being sufficient; others have decided upon a genderless or neuter image; and others have opted for nothing less than 100% female images. After all, this is the better product—the one that will serve more effectively to correct the oppressiveness found in our churches and our society.

It's time to take a closer look at the basic theological issues that are at stake here. Specifically, we need to inquire into the theological legitimacy of the premises upon which the feminist workshops are organized and which are responsible for the work being carried out. Assumptions are being made, not only about the use of language, but about the nature of the Christian God himself, that are being regarded as almost self-evident, and frequently being accepted without question as axiomatic.

Crucial, of course, is the view that the Christian God is male. When it is pointed out that usage of masculine language does *not* mean that the biblical God is male (that never has been the teaching of either the central Christian or Jewish faith), the feminist response is usually—*But that is the way it is heard, and hence it is exclusive and offensive to women*. It may be that some people have heard it that way, but if so, that is a misconception—a misunderstanding. Misunderstandings can only be corrected by improving our understanding, by arriving at a better understanding. One cannot correct a misconception by further contributing to that misconception, by reinforcing it and making it appear valid even though it is invalid.

Attempts to correct this misconception by employing

female images and language to speak of God (i.e., attempts to counteract the maleness of God by "feminizing" the deity) are based upon a further assumption, namely, the claim that the Bible itself makes frequent use of female images for God, and this justifies the use of female language as a literary device to overcome the sexism of the patriarchal tradition.

This assumption is based on a fundamental linguistic and literary mistake. The nature of this mistake is dealt with specifically by several authors in *Speaking the Christian God* (ed. Alvin Kimel: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1992), most directly by Roland Frye. As Frye puts it, this mistake consists in a confusion about two central uses of language, two figures of speech, which he refers to as "metaphor" and "simile."

We don't need to get into a debate over what a metaphor is and how it functions. That is not the issue. The issue is simply this: whatever term you use to indicate them, you have two different uses of language (or figures of speech) that are being employed. One merely states a resemblance, saying that something may be like something else under certain conditions. This figure of speech Frye calls a **simile**, and the way in which something may be like something else is clarified or explained by the context in which it is used. The other form of speech, which Frye calls a **metaphor**, makes a bold statement that the one thing represents, or predicates the other. This form of speech stretches language, so to speak, as a means of providing a fuller and more direct understanding of the subject in question.

The Bible is filled with statements which say that God, in certain situations—under certain conditions and in specific contexts—*acts* like something else, or may be compared to something else. And some of these involve feminine activities or subjects. Thus God in the Scriptures is said to act like a comforting mother [Isaiah 66:13], cry out like a woman in childbirth, act like a mother eagle, and rage like a mother bear robbed of her cubs [Hosea 13:8]. But God is never addressed as mother. To say that God acts like a mother bear robbed of her cubs is vividly meaningful; to say that God *is* a mother bear is ludicrous.

It is also very generally assumed that the biblical language is sexist, and, of course, the prime examples are "Father" and "Son." Obviously, Jesus of Nazareth is male. But *are* these terms sexist? A number of authors have shown, very convincingly, that the relation between the Father and the Son as provided in Scripture has nothing to do with sexuality. (Here I simply refer you to some sources that argue this point very clearly, such as the articles in *Speaking the Christian God* by Garrett Green, Colin Gunton, as well as those by Elizabeth Achtemeier and Roland Frye. These all provide references to additional sources.)

To call God Father in the Christian tradition is always shorthand for "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." In other words, it does not refer to *a* father, but it addresses God in solidarity with Jesus as "our Father." Hence the meaning of the metaphor has to be sought in the story of *the One Whom Jesus called Father*. Immersion in that story—immersion in Scripture—provides the means for eventually recognizing that those images we have made in our own

workshops to serve our own purposes are lies that we hold in our hands.

We need to close our carpenter shops—all of them—and immerse ourselves in Scripture. Then we will meet the Christian God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our Father.

For further study into the questions raised by this essay I highly recommend the following books:

Mary A. Kassian, *The Feminist Gospel: The Movement to Unite Feminism with the Church* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1992).

Leander E. Keck, *The Church Confident* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1993).

Alvin Kimel (editor), *Speaking the Christian God* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1992).

The volume entitled *Speaking the Christian God* deals specifically, and in detail, with the relationship of feminism to Christianity. It includes an article of mine that is distinct from the present essay, but one with the same title, "Christianity or Feminism?" ««

School Prayer—Fact or Fantasy?

Alvin C. Nix

In 1984, eleven years ago, Congress passed and the President signed the Equal Access law. Under its provisions, school administrations must respect the students' right to meet on school grounds as an official extra-curricular activity despite the religious, political, or philosophical content of the meeting. The constitutionality of this law was upheld by the Supreme Court in a verdict of 8 to 1 when it decided on the case *Mergens v. Westside Community School System* of Omaha, Nebraska in June 1990. Outside of youth ministries such as Youth for Christ or Young Life and knowledgeable church youth group leaders, most people are not familiar with the law. Unfortunately, the truth of this statement is evident in the overemphasis on the passage of a school prayer amendment assuring students the right to pray in the public schools. We have, in a sense, been barking up the wrong tree. It is time for Christians to understand more fully the personal and religious rights of students.

The Establishment Clause of the Constitution, as interpreted by the Supreme Court in 1962, forbids government sponsorship of religion or religious activity. Since students are not part of the government, the clause does not restrict their activity. It is important to note that this is provided that the students' actions do not disrupt the orderly operation of the school. Therefore, schools cannot forbid extracurricular student meetings on the basis of religion or religious overtones, for that would constitute a violation of the rights of students granted under the First Amendment's Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Assembly

clauses.

As defined, public schools are allowed to have Bible or Christian Fellowship clubs for prayer or Bible study on campus that meet the guidelines stipulated by the Equal Access law. Public schools receiving federal funding and having a "limited open forum" are subject to the law. A limited open forum exists whenever a school either grants an offering to, or opportunity for, one or more non-curriculum student groups to meet on the school premises during non-instructional time. Therefore, if a school has a Future Farmers of America or 4-H club meeting for students scheduled either in the morning before or in the afternoon after classes, or even in the time during lunch which is non-instructional, then a limited open forum has been established. The school is subject to compliance with the Equal Access law.

If these initial conditions are met and Christian students desire a Bible or Christian Fellowship club, the school must offer a fair opportunity for them to conduct such a meeting under the following guidelines:

1. The activity must be student initiated and participation in such voluntary. The key words here are **student initiated** and **voluntary participation!** This must be an independent activity, without any outside affiliations, and allow students to participate of their own free-will or volition;
2. That there is no sponsorship of the meeting by the school, government, or its employees. According to the Equal Access law, such an activity must be given the same status as any other extra-curricular activity of the school including distribution of flyers for their meetings, posting of the flyers on the school premises for public notice, and announcements advertising their activities on the school public address system;
3. Employees of the school or government are present at the meetings only in a non-participatory capacity. Interested faculty members may serve as advisors to the activity in this role for reasons of supervision for public safety as required by the school. In the event that there is no such person forthcoming, the school must provide one since the legal responsibility is on the school administration, not the students, for safety.
4. That meetings or activities do not materially and substantially interfere with the orderly conduct of educational or instructive process of the school; and
5. That non-school persons are not allowed to direct, conduct, control, or regularly attend the activity of the student. If given prior permission, special speakers are permitted to share on an area of their expertise that is of common interest.

The major factor underlying the success of this effort is prayer. Students whether in junior or senior high school must seek the Lord for direction if this is an activity where they are being called to serve. It means moving from being

a private Christian to a public one in the most difficult court of them all - among your peers. Parents must become involved by praying for and supporting their teenager. Especially, if the desire to start or participate in a school based Bible club is expressed. Pastors and youth workers also need to pray for the schools in their areas for God to raise up committed Christian teenagers who will stand for their faith in Christ. Some of the very teenagers who could make a significant difference are in the pews and youth groups of their churches.

Another factor which would help underlie this effort is preparation. There is no substitute for knowing the content of the Equal Access law. If you are going to approach a school administrator, your familiarity with the law is essential. Information can be obtained from the following sources:

Youth for Christ/USA 1-(303)-843-9000
(You may call your local YFC program)
P.O. 228822
Denver, Colorado 80222

Christian Legal Society 1-(703)-642-1070
4208 Evergreen Lane, Suite 222
Annadale, Virginia 22003

Young Life 1-(719)-590-7733
Attn: Cliff Anderson
5125 Centennial Blvd.
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80919

This information is important not only to Christian teenagers and their parents but also to professionals in teaching, educational administration, and business. The latter case refers to lawyers who, as a matter of Christian principle may familiarize themselves with the law and offer *pro bono* assistance as there will be resistance caused by a misinterpretation as to what constitutes the separation between Church and State. Having and knowing about legal assistance as a resource is an encouragement for students and their parents in this endeavor.

The final factor underlying the success of this effort is planning. Students have the right to meet and pray on their junior or senior high school campus, yet, they can shape the activity any way they want. The students at Baldwin High School in New York held three concerts on consecutive weeks in the Spring of 1994. They worked together on the planning, fund raising, selling of tickets, and performing at the concert. They have also involved students from all four classes in the leadership team, thus assuring future leadership. All they did was share leadership by developing a Fellowship constitution, work with the administration of their school, and presented a witness of Christ working through them.

One year ago, Herricks High School had two students that expressed an interest in starting a Bible club on their campus. As far as they knew, the school student body only had two Christians when they began to pray and familiarize themselves with the Equal Access law. Today, the club has twenty-three regular attenders who meet weekly for prayer and Bible study. Their effort is commendable, yet, it is important to note that the Herricks School District is the one in which the original lawsuit began leading to the

Supreme Court's 1962 ruling on the Establishment Clause!

Do we need a Prayer Amendment? No, we do not because of the unnecessary energy spent on "spinning our wheels" or barking up the wrong tree. What we need is committed prayer for God to work in our present situation, an understanding of the Equal Access law and how it applies, and Christian teenagers taking a stand and willing to let God use them in extra-ordinary ways! The fact is that we have a God that responds to our prayers. The fantasy is waiting for the government to act on our behalf. ««

Calvin Responds to Universalism

Galen Johnson

In the eighty-second of his ninety-five theses, Martin Luther asked if the pope really has the power to spring souls from Purgatory, why doesn't he graciously empty Purgatory altogether by a plenary decree of indulgence? Given John Calvin's conviction that all God's human creatures have sinned and live in rejection of God's mercy, one might reasonably ask Calvin a similar question: Why does not God, who is reputed to be exceedingly gracious, have mercy on the entire human race and bring salvation to all?

Calvin was well aware of this objection; at the beginning of *Institutes* III.xxii.10, he mentions "some moderate men" who, "not so much to stifle the truth as to bar thorny questions, 'teach that God's salvific love extends to every individual'—i.e. universal election and salvation. 'A laudable intention, this,' Calvin thinks, 'but the design is not to be approved, for evasion is never excusable.'¹ What do the universalist thinkers evade? They have not fully perceived that election gains content only when contrasted with reprobation, and the truth of many of Jesus's parables is that he does not remove the curse from those who have heard his call and who have not obeyed.

Romans 8:30 speaks of "those" whom God predestined; Hebrews 9:28 says that Christ was offered once to bear the sins "of many"; Jesus in John 17:9 prays not for the whole world but for "those . . . given" him by the Father, and Revelation 21:8 predicts, with the threat of a curse upon those who do not listen (22:19), that before the new Jerusalem descends from heaven, the unrighteous will be consigned to a "second death" in a lake burning with fire and sulfur. These passages unanimously indicate that the number of God's elect is not coterminous with the number of individuals who have ever lived. Those who are not elected unto salvation serve a purpose: God uses them to show forth the fullness of his justice, which is an equal portion with God's mercy in God's overall glory. Calvin might grant Barth's conjecture that it is Christ alone who bears God's justice if he found such a notion in the scriptures, but he does not. In the *Institutes* III.xxiii.1, he cites Jesus's words in Matthew 15:13: "Every tree that my . . . Father has not planted will be uprooted."

What, then, is one to say of Romans 11:32, "For God

¹Calvin, *Institutes*, pp. 943-944 (III.xxii.10).

has consigned all men to disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all" (RSV)? Superficially, this verse might appear to mitigate the harsh words of Romans 9:14-23, which speaks of God having mercy upon whomever he wills and fashioning whomever he wills as "vessels of destruction." Perhaps, then, the language of vessels of destruction would mean that the rejection of God by some *in history* is part of a greater dialectic wherein God's eschatological mercy is the antithesis of the "hardened heart" he first effected, and the synthesis of the two is redemption for all. However, the reasons for rejecting this interpretation are at least twofold.

Firstly, this universalistic explanation does not fully reckon with manifold texts to the contrary, such as Jesus's parables in Luke 16 and 19, which warn of everlasting rejection for those who would rely upon Jewish inheritance for their salvation. Indeed, it does not make clear why Paul uses in

Romans 9:22 a term suggestive of finality, "destruction", in regard to those who are allegedly only "temporarily" rejected.

Secondly, as J. Barmby points out in his exposition of Romans, the Greek phrase translated as "all" in Romans 11:32, *tous pantas*, does not indicate all individuals but representatives from all peoples, that is, "God's embracing [of] all races of mankind at last in the arms of his mercy by calling them into the Church. Thus the latter expression is not in itself adducible in support of the doctrine of universalism."² In the *Institutes* III.xxiv.17, Calvin says that Romans 11:32 shows us that salvation is to be ascribed to the mercy of God alone, but it does not mean that this benefit is common to all. He adds in his commentary on this verse, "But extremely gross is their folly who hence conclude that all shall be saved; for Paul simply means that both Jews and Gentiles do not otherwise obtain salvation than through the mercy of God, and thus he leaves to none any reason for complaint."³

Another potentially objectionable passage is 1 Tim 2:4, which reads, "[God] desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (RSV). If God's will is incontrovertibly effectual, than *why are not all people saved?* If one looks at the context of 1 Tim 2:4, one sees that in verses 1-2 of 1 Tim 2, the author urges prayers "for all men"—specifically for kings and leaders—that we may be able to live lives of peace. At the time of the writing of this

epistle, Calvin explains, worldly rulers were most hostile to the nascent Christian religion. Thus, when the author exhorts prayer for all, he means that prayer should encompass even those hostile to the faith whom one would not expect to be saved, for God's saving grace extends to all *classes* of people.⁴ Given his conviction that all of holy scripture derives from the same unified will of God, Calvin cannot but make this move if he is to maintain exegetical consistency with other texts, particularly 2 Tim. 2:25: "God *may perhaps grant* [author's emphasis] that they [the Lord's opponents] will repent and come to know the truth" (RSV).

In light of 2 Tim. 2:25, Calvin's exegesis of 1 Tim. 2:4 is not an act of contortion but a warranted and necessary step which preserves the unified witness of the Bible to a God who sifts men and women according to his own purpose and who nowhere guarantees that he will deliver all of us from the judgment we deserve.

It is quite true, of course, that the cleansing power of Jesus's blood would be effective enough for the entire human race if God desired it to be so. This is precisely why Calvin believes that Christians have a responsibility to preach the gospel to all—because "Christ came to atone for the sins of the whole world."⁵ However, preaching will yield one of two fruits in its hearers, depending on God's good pleasure—either the sweet fruit of salvation or the bitter fruit of rejection. Thus, while all are called unto repentance, few are *chosen* for repentance by God. The value of preaching for the elect is that it is the instrument by which God's redemption is impressed upon those persons' minds and lives. "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Romans 8:29). However, for the reprobate, preaching serves to harden their hearts even more and thus make even more severe their deserved punishment. Now, "the wicked cannot claim they lack a sanctuary to which they may hide themselves from the bondage of sin, inasmuch as they, out of their own ungratefulness, reject it when offered."⁶ Calvin teaches this doctrine not of personal preference, as Fred Klooster says in *Calvin's Doctrine of Predestination*, but out of faithfulness to scriptural teaching. May his wise teaching inspire us to discard all hope in ourselves and cling for saving mercy and guidance to the Lord Jesus Christ alone. ««

I am sitting with a philosopher in the garden; he says again and again, "I know that that's a tree," pointing to a tree that is near us. Someone else arrives and hears this, and I tell him: "This fellow isn't insane. We are only doing philosophy."

—Ludwig Wittgenstein

²J. Barmby, "The Epistle of Paul to the Romans", in *The Pulpit Commentary*, volume 18, edited by H.D.M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell, Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans, 1962, p. 325.

³Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, *Calvin's Commentaries*, volume XIX, translated by John Owen, Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1993, p. 443.

⁴Calvin, "The Secret Providence of God", pp. 275-276.

⁵Calvin, "The Eternal Predestination of God", p. 165.

⁶Calvin, *Institutes*, p. 985 (III.xxiv.17). For an extended discussion distinguishing universal atonement from universal election in Calvin, see James William Anderson, *The Grace of God and the Non-elect in Calvin's Commentaries and Sermons*, New Orleans Baptist Seminary, May 1976, pp. 110-113.

The Christian System of Truth

Brian Arthur Frederick

*You shall know the truth, and
the truth shall set you free.*

For a church and a world full of voices crying for deliverance from oppression, our Savior has provided a means certain to loose every chain. The means to deliverance from all oppression is knowledge of the truth, if we are to believe our Lord.

It has become fashionable, however, especially among those who speak most eloquently about the sundry oppressions of this life to deny that truth can be known with any certainty. With one hand they reach out to seize the chains of oppression in order to tear them from the oppressed, but with the other they cast away the only tool able to break the chains.

I shall not speculate as to why so many choose to reject the only means of deliverance. They, no doubt, can explain their own reasons better than I. What I should like to do is to examine the nature of the truth that our Lord prescribed for our deliverance.

Our Lord speaks of knowing *the* truth. He does not speak of a truth, or of truth in the abstract. Nor does He speak of "your" truth or "my" truth. He speaks of *the* truth. It is the definite, distinct truth. It leaves room for no other competing truth. It is *the* truth. All else that claims to be truth but does not agree with *the* truth is false and a lie. Knowing the truth is of immeasurable value, for conditioned upon knowing it is a promise of deliverance to them who know it. The promise is certain: the truth shall set you free. Jesus did not say it might set you free. He did not say it could set you free. No, the promise is certain: you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.

So beset are we today by epistemological doubt that we shy away from claiming that we know truth. Claims of knowing truth come across as sounding naive at best or dreadfully intolerant at worst. It is fashionable even among believers to express doubt and to be skeptical about all claims to truth. Tolerance is to be had for every belief and every one expressing a belief—except for the one who asserts that he knows the truth. Those who assert that they know the truth are accused of arrogance, intolerance, and excessive rationality. The deepest suspicion is reserved for those who hold that the truth of the Gospel can be found or contained in clear, propositional statements, and that the Christian faith requires a system of such truths.

Before I am misunderstood, notice that I did not say that the Christian faith *consists* of a system of truths. To say this would be to reduce the faith to a set of intellectual propositions to be accepted or rejected intellectually, which is a distortion of the faith to be rejected. The true faith goes beyond this. The faith is lived as well as believed, and ultimately, the true test of our faith is our love for God and one another expressed in our deeds. Indeed, the apostle said that the believer who knows all mysteries and all knowledge is nothing if he lacks love.

The love of which the apostle speaks is not, as so many today seem to think, mere sentimental feeling or indiscriminate toleration and acceptance. Nor is it opposed to knowledge. In praying for the Philippian church Paul asks that their love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight so that they can determine what is best and be pure and blameless in the day of Christ. True love is not ignorant or naive. It is guided by knowledge and discernment of what is best, of what is true, and it bears ethical fruit. Thus it will not do to oppose love to knowledge.

The faith, then, cannot be reduced to a system of truth. But that Christianity involves, yea requires, a system of truth is inescapable. Thus it cannot be divorced from a system of truth and remain Christian.

The Christian system of truth consists in the description and understanding of the real relations that all creatures bear to one another and to God. It is the true description of things as they actually are in the eyes of God. It is the understanding of what is that conforms to the reality of what is. Knowledge of ourselves, of creation, and of God is true to the extent that it conforms to reality. Wherever it does not conform to reality, it is false.

We use propositions to describe reality. 'God exists' is the fundamental proposition of the faith. Either God exists or He does not exist. One and only one of these propositions can correctly describe reality, and the other must be false. There are other propositions that we use to describe the faith. God created all things that are not Himself. Jesus Christ lived as a man on this earth in history. He was born of the virgin Mary. He died on a cross. He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven. These propositions and others like them either describe the reality that was or is, or they do not. Either they are true, or they are false. The whole set of true propositions that we use to describe the reality of God and of His created order comprise the Christian system of truth.

The necessity for this system of truth flows from the very nature of God and of His creation. God exists in Himself and for Himself. He is fully self-determined and self-sufficient. He creates the world out of love and freedom, not out of need. He does not need us, but chooses to give us existence and takes pleasure in those who are His own. The universe and all that is in it—all that is not Creator—is what it is because God has made it so, calling it into being by His mighty Word according to the inscrutable counsel of His will. God alone is self-determined being. All other things that exist, all creatures, are God-determined being. They are contingent. They are what they are because God has made them so. They have meaning and purpose only in relation to God's purpose and plan for them, not in themselves.

God knows Himself and all that He has made exhaustively, and His knowledge conforms perfectly to its objects. In His mind exists the system of truth, which is the true description of all that is, including Himself. He alone exhaustively knows all things in all their particulars just as they really are, for He alone determines the nature of all things. This perfect and complete system of truth exists only in the infinite mind of the Creator. It is knowledge that is too high for us to attain with our finite minds. In its fullness, it is beyond us, but it exists nonetheless.

The question, then, for Christians, becomes not whether this system of truth exists but whether we can know it. Can we know God, His relation to the creature, and the relations of creature to creature as they really are? Can we know the truth?

Clearly we cannot know the system of truth that exists in God's mind exhaustively, for our finite minds cannot fully grasp the infinite. But does our inability to know all things exhaustively make it impossible for us to know a part of that system of truth? Can our finite knowledge of God, ourselves, and of creation conform to the reality of those things?

Jesus dares to assert that we can know the truth, and that the truth will set us free. We may take it on His authority that our finite knowledge can be true. Indeed, He expects us to pursue true knowledge.

Our experience of knowing the objects around us confirms Jesus' words. For example, no human being can claim to have exhaustive knowledge of all the properties of water and gasoline and of all the relations that those substances have within their own constituent atoms and with other substances. Our knowledge of water and gasoline is not exhaustive. This does not mean that our limited knowledge of water and gasoline is not true and does not conform to the reality of those things. We drink water knowing that it replenishes and refreshes our bodies. We may not know exactly how it does so, but we know that it does. In this respect our knowledge of water is true though not exhaustive. Similarly, we know that water poured upon our bodies will wash from them most of the dirt and grime we encounter. In this our knowledge conforms to the reality of water in relation to our skin and to dirt and grime. We also know that water will not remove oil-based paint from our skin. We know enough about the reality of gasoline to know that it will remove the paint from our skin. We also know that gasoline would not be a good choice for washing ordinary dirt and grime from our skin and that it would be downright fatal to take a candlelight bubble bath in it. In all these things our knowledge, though incomplete, is true, for it conforms to reality.

The same is true in our relationships with other people. I meet another person for the first time. At a glance I come to know her as a woman. Though there is much more to be known of her, this limited knowledge is true. In a word I know her name by which I can differentiate her from most other women. In the course of a half hour of conversation, I learn many more things about her that conform to the reality

of who she is. My knowledge of her in her gender, her name, and in the other particulars is limited but true, and it is, by its nature, propositional. As we continue to interact over time, I become able to say that she is my friend, and this proposition, if it is true, will conform to the reality of our relationship even though it may not exhaust it. Eventually my knowledge of her may come to include the

proposition 'X is my fiancée' and then 'X is my wife.' Each of these propositions expresses true knowledge as it conforms to the reality of my relationship with her. Just as my knowledge of water and gasoline causes me to interact or not to interact with each liquid in various ways, so my knowledge of X as wife leads me to interact with her in a way that I would not interact with her if I knew her only as friend. My knowledge of X can be expressed accurately with the proposition 'X is my wife', but the truth of that proposition in no way limits my relationship with her to intellectual assent to that proposition.

Our knowledge of God is similar. Christians believe

that the propositions 'Jesus is Lord', 'Jesus is Savior', and 'Jesus is God' are true, that is, they conform to the reality of Jesus' person. Yet the Christian faith and the knowledge of God cannot and do not reduce to simple intellectual assent to these propositions. To know Jesus as Lord is to obey Him. To know Him as Savior is to love Him. To know Him as God is to worship Him. Love, obedience, and worship produce attitudes and actions in the believer that go beyond mere intellectual assent to the propositions involved in them. To know Jesus as Lord, Savior, and God is to respond to Him in certain predictable ways, much as for me to know a woman as my wife causes me to respond to her in certain ways.

If the Christian faith goes far beyond assenting to a set of theological propositions, at the same time it cannot exist without them. Correct response to God depends upon true propositions about Him. Necessarily involved in the Christian faith is a system of truth, a set of true propositions about God, about man, and about the world. The fact that exhaustive knowledge of the Christian system of truth is not available to us does not keep our knowledge from being true or destroy its systematic nature. Our finitude keeps us from seeing many of the connections in the system, and it is at those points that paradox and mystery intrude. But the system by its very nature cannot contradict itself, for contradictions cannot exist in reality, though they may seem to exist from our perspective.

With finite minds we struggle to grasp the infinite

Top Ten Princeton Seminary Words Juniors Do Not Want to Hear In '95/'96

10. Sophia
9. spirituality
8. General Ministry
7. diverse
6. community
5. Godself
4. other-
3. praxis
2. Shug
1. marginalized

glory of God. Our creaturehood necessarily limits what we can grasp or say about the Infinite. Our creaturehood does not, however, keep us from saying that which is accurate and true about the Infinite. Otherwise Jesus misleads us when He says that we can know the truth.

How can we know Jesus, the way, the truth, and the life, today? I dare say none of us has seen Him in the flesh, and if this is so, it cannot be a criterion of true faith. Jesus Himself told Thomas that those who do not see but believe anyway are blessed. Is it, then, through some sort of existential encounter or quiescent voice in the soul? There is no doubt among true believers that Christ does meet and speak with them personally in a real way, but given our great capacity for self-deception and the blinding effects of sin upon us, this cannot suffice. We need a word that is publicly accessible, that has its origin outside of us, and that stands over and against us to call us out of our self-deception and darkness into the light.

It is for this reason that God has given us the Scriptures. It was on the basis of the Scriptures of the Old Testament that Jesus expected the Jews to identify Him as the promised Messiah. Without the inspired, written testimony, there would be no way to make positive identification of the Savior in history. Jesus rebuked the Jews because they believed Moses and the revelation God had given to Moses without believing in Jesus, the one about whom Moses had prophesied. Through the propositional testimony of the Scriptures, Jesus expected the Jews to be able to identify Him as the Messiah.

Without the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments which the Church confesses to be its only rule for faith and practice, we are lost epistemologically in the world. It is the propositional revelation of God in Scripture that reveals and interprets Christ and his work. Many dispute the propositional nature of the Revelation in Scripture. They argue that the words of Scripture are not revelational in themselves, that is, they do not contain true propositions that we are to believe. Rather, through the reading, study, and preaching of Scripture, the Holy Spirit mysteriously works to give us revelation that otherwise would be veiled to us. Thus we listen 'for' the word of the Lord that is hidden from us rather than 'to' the word of the Lord that directs and commands us.

This view leads to an emphasis on narrative and the communicative power of metaphor. It is said that most people learn best through stories and not through logical, reasoned, propositional argument. It is pointed out that Jesus, recognizing this truth, used parables to convey his teaching. Clearly there is truth in this. Narrative does communicate in a powerful way that goes beyond propositions. But narrative suffers from limitations, the first of which is ambiguity. What is often overlooked by the promoters of narrative preaching and theology is that Jesus himself recognized the limitations of his own approach. When His disciples asked Him why He taught in parables, He explained that it had not been given to them who listened to know the mysteries of the kingdom. Jesus had to explain the meaning of the parables to the disciples in propositional language so that they could understand their meaning, for to them it had been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. Just as Jesus interprets the narratives of

the parables in propositional language so that their meaning will be clear and precise, so the apostles interpret the meaning of the narratives of the gospels in the epistles. We should not know the full meaning of the death and resurrection of Christ without Paul's exposition of their meaning in Romans and I Corinthians 15. Without this inspired interpretation and commentary, the meaning of the gospel narratives is ambiguous. Guided by the precision of the propositional commentary in the epistles, we are able to read the narratives of the gospels with a new and deeper sense of their meaning. Without the guidance of the authoritative apostolic interpretation, we are left to read our own meaning into the ambiguous gospel narratives. Thus propositional truth is inescapable in Scripture and in our preaching.

With the light of the system of propositional truth derived from Scripture, we can begin to gain an understanding of God, ourselves and the world that conforms to God's own understanding of these things. Ultimately, in spite of all our hermeneutic difficulties, the knowledge that we gain from God's revelation in Scripture and the knowledge that we gain from His revelation in nature must agree, if it is true knowledge. Charles Hodge and the Old Princetonians held this belief firmly. Scripture properly interpreted and nature correctly read cannot but agree, for they share a common source in the Creator who makes all things what they are. The true believer need not fear the true science which seeks to understand the observable phenomena of this world, for this world is our Father's world. The truths of science and the truths of Scripture ultimately agree. Science and theology provide mutual illumination as we seek truth. This is a basic premise which flows out of the Christian understanding of God as Creator.

Often the results of science contradict what we understand of Scripture. This is inevitable, for creation is vast and Scripture is deep. The exhaustive study of both exceeds the investigative energies of many generations. Science, using its limited inductive method to investigate the phenomena of this world, must attempt to draw conclusions without having exhaustive knowledge of the facts. Theology, using its own methods, seeks to understand Scripture as its Author intended it to be understood, but hindered by human pride, sin, and simple finitude, it falls short. This does not, however, negate existence of the system of truth, nor does it make it inaccessible to us.

We labor under the limitations of our finite creaturehood. Our knowledge of God, our world, and ourselves is incomplete. This does not mean that it is not true and accurate. This does not mean that our faith does not involve a system of propositional truth. The task of Christian theologians and scholars is to seek a fuller and more accurate knowledge of the system of truth that exists in the mind of God through our study of Scripture and nature. So vast is the material that we have to work with, that it is specious to object that propositional revelation is static and limiting. After two thousand years, we have much yet to learn, both cognitively and behaviorally. Our task is to press ahead in faith and hope to seek knowledge of the truth diligently in a spirit of humility and fear of the Lord—which is the ground of all true wisdom and knowledge. ««

The God-of-the-Gaps

William A. Dembski

The following essay is part of a guest lecture given by Bill Dembski to a class taught in the fall of 1994 by Professor Wentzel van Huyssteen at Princeton Theological Seminary. The topic of Prof. van Huyssteen's course was theology and the challenge of Darwinism.

—The Editors

I know no better place where the god-of-the-gaps fallacy is illustrated than in Daniel Defoe's classic tale *Robinson Crusoe*. Crusoe is a castaway on a deserted Caribbean island, who in relating his story describes what he for a time took to be rather remarkable evidence of God's miraculous intercession on his behalf:

I saw some few stalks of something green shooting out of the ground, which I fancied might be some plant I had not seen; but I was surprised and perfectly astonished, when after a little longer time I saw about ten or twelve ears come out, which were perfect green barley of the same kind as our European, nay, as our English barley.

It is impossible to express the astonishment and confusion of my thoughts on this occasion; I had hitherto acted upon no religious foundation at all; indeed I had very few notions of religion in my head, nor had entertained any sense of anything that had befallen me, otherwise than as a chance, or, as we lightly say, what pleases God; without so much as inquiring into the end of Providence in these things, or His order in governing events in the world. But after I saw barley grow there, in a climate which I know was not proper for corn, and especially that I knew not how it came there, it startled me strangely, and I began to suggest that God had miraculously caused this grain to grow without any help of seed sown, and that it was so directed purely for my sustenance on the wild miserable place.

This touched my heart a little and brought tears out of my eyes, and I began to bless myself, that such a prodigy of Nature should happen upon my account. . . . I not only thought these the pure productions of Providence for my support, but not doubting but that there was more in the place, I went all over the part of the island where I had been before, peering in every corner and under every rock, to see for more of it, but I could not find any.

At last it occurred to my thought that I had shook a bag of chickens' meat [i.e., grain or "corn"] out in that place, and then the wonder began to cease; and I must confess, my religious thankfulness to God's Providence began to abate too upon the discovering that all this was nothing but what was common; though I ought to have been as thankful for so strange and unforeseen Providence, as if it had been miraculous; for it was really the work of Providence as to me, that should order or appoint, that ten or twelve grains of corn should remain unspoiled (when the rats had destroyed all the rest), as if it had been dropped from Heaven; as also that I should throw it out in that particular place where, it being in the shade of a high rock, it sprang up immediately; whereas if I had thrown it anywhere else at that time, it had been burnt up and destroyed.

Crusoe has committed a classic god-of-the-gaps fallacy. His mistake consists in employing an extraordinary explanation where an ordinary explanation will do, or more specifically, in invoking God to serve as the missing link in a causal chain where an ordinary natural cause suffices. And indeed, once Crusoe discovered the ordinary explanation of how English barley came to appear on his island, namely, that he by accident had dropped some barley seeds on the ground, Crusoe discarded the extraordinary explanation that a divine miracle had produced the barley.

Now the crucial question before us is whether employing design in biology inevitably lands us in the same sort of error, substituting an extraordinary explanation where an ordinary explanation will do. To see that design is perfectly capable of avoiding this error, it is necessary that we distinguish clearly between two very different questions: (1) *Did a designer act to bring about a given object or event?* and if so (2) *How did the designer act to bring about the given object or event?* I'll call the first question the *detectability question* (i.e., was it even a designer that brought about the given object or event?) and the second the *modality question* (i.e., by precisely what means was the object or event in question brought to pass). The detectability question asks simply whether a designer acted at all, though by implication also what warrant we have for thinking a designer acted. The modality question, on the other hand, asks for a narrative describing precisely what happened in space and time to bring about the object or event under consideration.

Both these questions are implicit in the Crusoe example. Initially Crusoe thought that a designer (in this case the God of Christianity) had produced English barley on his island by means of a miracle. Taking it for granted that the detectability question was to receive an affirmative reply, Crusoe's first attempt to answer the modality question was to say that God had produced English barley on his island by performing a miracle. Nevertheless, even after it became clear to Crusoe that his answer to the modality question was incorrect, and that a perfectly ordinary answer would suffice, his answer to the detectability question remained unchanged. In Crusoe's mind God was still responsible for the barley growing on his island, only this time instead of specially creating an exact replica of English barley on his Caribbean island, God had arranged circumstances so that (1) some barley seeds were preserved from the rats on the ship, (2) the seeds made their way safely to shore, and (3) they found fertile ground on the island. The end was the same, but the means differed. If you will, instead of God overriding nature, as Crusoe thought initially, God qua Providence was working with, in, and through nature to give Crusoe his English barley.

Of course, not just his answer to the modality question, but even Crusoe's answer to the detectability question is open to dispute. Nevertheless, the point I wish to stress is that the detectability and modality questions are largely independent, with the correct answer, or even lack of an answer, to one question not necessarily affecting the correct answer to the other. For instance, given a Stradivarius violin, we are correct in answering the detectability question in the affirmative (i.e., the violin was indeed designed, and what's more, Stradivarius was the designer), even though we

don't know how to answer the modality question—we no longer know how to manufacture a violin as good as a Stradivarius violin, much less how Stradivarius himself actually went about making his violins. Lost arts are lost precisely because we are no longer able to answer the modality question, not because our answer to the detectability question has changed. Alternatively, to answer the detectability question in the affirmative is not to prejudge the modality question. Crusoe identified Providence as responsible for the English barley he found growing on his island, but initially understood Providence as acting miraculously, and then later as acting through perfectly ordinary natural causes.

What is the status of extraordinary explanations, i.e., explanations that specify a gap somewhere in the chain of natural causes? Leaving room for extraordinary explanations seems to me important philosophically, for without the freedom to seriously entertain extraordinary explanations we place naturalism in a metaphysically privileged position. There is no compelling reason why in answering the modality question we must in every instance be able in principle to tell a gapless naturalistic narrative. Nor is it the case that the god-of-the-gaps always constitutes a fallacy. Indeed, the fallacy arises only if an ordinary explanation suffices where an extraordinary explanation was previously invoked. But that ordinary explanations should *always* have this capacity cannot be justified. Whether an extraordinary explanation is appropriate depends on the event that needs to be explained and the circumstances surrounding the event.

With Crusoe's English barley an extraordinary explanation was inappropriate. Indeed, even if Crusoe were certain that he himself had not brought barley seeds to his island, appealing to a miracle would still have been dubious, for some Englishman might have been stranded on the same island before Crusoe, and have brought some barley seeds with him. On the other hand, if Crusoe's foot had gotten crushed under a huge boulder, so that Crusoe had to hack off part of his leg to get free, and if subsequently Crusoe grew back a new foot, an extraordinary explanation would be required. Certainly Crusoe would be justified in saying that a miracle qua gap in the chain of natural causes had occurred, though whether he would be justified in attributing the miracle to the God of Christianity or some other religious faith is another matter.

I'm not making a case either for or against extraordinary explanations. My aim is simply to make room for whatever form our answers to the modality question may take. Wittgenstein once remarked, "Very intelligent and well-educated people believe in the story of creation in the Bible, while others hold it as proven false, and the grounds of the latter are well known to the former." British and American

societies for psychical research have routinely had in their leadership Nobel laureates whose disciplines span the full range of the sciences. Medical journals regularly report cases of spontaneous remissions for which no ordinary explanations are offered. The physician and Nobel laureate Alexis Carrel claims himself to have witnessed miraculous cures which as far as he was concerned "are stubborn, irreducible facts, which must be taken into account."

Of course, there are plenty of intelligent people who hold the contrary view. David Hume's critique of miracles is well-known. Voltaire, though not an atheist, held that "to suppose that God will work miracles is to insult Him with impunity." Spinoza had nothing but contempt for those "who will not cease from asking the causes of causes, until at last you fly to the will of God, the refuge for ignorance." More recently, we have seen the logical positivists insist that extraordinary explanations are pseudo-solutions to pseudo-problems. And currently we have a scientific and philosophical elite at the

Skeptical Inquirer who make it their business to debunk anything that smacks of the extraordinary.

Where one in the end comes down on the question of extraordinary explanations is a matter of indifference to me. Nevertheless, it is a matter of some concern to me that the question of extraordinary explanations not be prejudged, and thereby ruled out of court, by a commitment to naturalism, especially a naturalism that is supposedly underwritten by science. The received view is that extraordinary explanations by their very nature are supposed to land us outside of science. And thus, even though extraordinary explanations may be of interest within certain modes of discourse, they are not properly part of scientific discourse, and therefore do qualify to be taken as seriously as scientific explanations. Methodological naturalism is of course the implicit assumption here.

But if we put methodological naturalism aside, why should we think we've landed outside of science just because the modality question happens to receive an extraordinary explanation, or has the possibility of receiving an extraordinarily explanation? Extraordinary explanations are extraordinary because they admit a gap in a chain of natural causes. Instead of having a chain of natural causes of the form

$$A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C \rightarrow D \rightarrow E \rightarrow F$$

(capital Roman letters here signify events, arrows signify natural causes) we have a chain in which one of the causal arrows is replaced by a gap, e.g.,

$$A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C \text{ gap } D \rightarrow E \rightarrow F$$

Now what is it about this latter picture, if anything, that places it beyond the pale of science? Certainly the events A through F are all open to scientific scrutiny.

Some Overused Phrases at Princeton Seminary

What I hear you saying is . . .

Let me affirm you in . . .

I want to be sensitive to . . .

I'm troubled by . . .

We need to dialogue about . . .

Purple is to lavender as . . .

Moreover, the arrows or causation connecting A to B and B to C as well as D to E and E to F are open to scientific scrutiny. Even the gap between C and D is open to scientific scrutiny in the sense that we can compare C with D and determine the nature of the discontinuity between C and D. What's more, D itself may clearly signal marks of having been designed, issuing in a design inference that convincingly allows the detectability question to be answered affirmatively, even though the precise causal predecessors of D are unclear.

Indeed, the only way the latter picture can land us beyond the pale of science is if we add to it the claim that a supernatural agent manipulated C to produce D. In this case what pushes us beyond the pale of science is the inability of scientists qua scientists to study the precise causal process that led from C to D (if indeed a supernatural agent employing supernatural means was responsible for bringing about D from C). But again it needs to be stressed that even if a supernatural agent was meddling with the causal nexus of nature, C and its causal precursors, D and its causal successors, the very gap between C and D, and any marks upon D that reliably signal the activity of a designer qua intelligent agent are all open to scientific investigation. The old chestnut that miracles lie outside of science is true only in the very limited sense that the precise causal process that from antecedent circumstances led to the event designated a miracle are claimed to lie beyond the scope of scientific investigation.

But even here I see no reason why the very claim that a given event was produced by a process beyond the scope of scientific investigation should not itself be a scientific claim, or at least a meta-scientific claim that science ought to take seriously. Suppose some strange phenomenon M is observed ("M" for miracle). A search is conducted to discover a scientifically acceptable ordinary explanation for M. The search fails. Conclusion: no scientifically acceptable ordinary explanation exists. Is there a problem here? Physicist and philosopher of religion Ian Barbour thinks there is:

We would submit that it is *scientifically stultifying* to say of any puzzling phenomenon that it is "incapable of scientific explanation," for such an attitude would undercut the motivation for inquiry. And such an approach is also *theologically dubious*, for it leads to another form of the "God of the gaps," the *deus ex machina* introduced to cover ignorance of what may later be shown to have natural causes.

To which C. A. Coulson adds,

When we come to the scientifically unknown, our correct policy is not to rejoice because we have found God; it is to become better scientists.

No doubt, there is something heroic, even Promethean, in the sentiments expressed by Barbour and Coulson. Given a difficult problem, our proper attitude is not to capitulate and admit irremediable ignorance, but rather to press on and struggle for a solution. If, however, no permissible solution to the problem exists (permissible in terms of the way the problem was formulated), are we to follow the example of Sisyphus, forever rolling the rock up the hill? When does courage turn to foolhardiness or stubbornness?

Barbour and Coulson are right to block lazy appeals to

God within scientific explanation. But that is not the question here. The question is not whether God did it, but whether science has the resources to provide an ordinary explanation for how M came about, and whether science has the capacity to recognize when its resources are so limited. In his book *The Realm of the Nebulae* cosmologist Edwin Hubble claimed that "not until the empirical resources are exhausted, need we pass on to the dreamy realms of speculation." When Hubble wrote this line in the 1930's, he clearly believed that the resources of science would never be exhausted and that our entrance into the dreamy realms of speculation could be postponed indefinitely. Nevertheless, there is nothing to prevent empirical (and, I might add, theoretical) resources from coming in limited supplies and getting exhausted, and in turn nothing to prevent scientists from recognizing when in fact their empirical and theoretical resources have been so exhausted.

How long are we to continue a search before we have a right to give up the search and declare not only that continuing the search is vain, but also that the very object of the search is non-existent (in the case at hand the object of the search being an ordinary explanation for the supposed miracle M)? The case of AIDS suggests that certain searches must never be given up. The discovery of the cause of AIDS in HIV has proved far easier than finding a cure. Yet even if the cure continues to elude us for as long as the human race endures, I trust the search will not be given up. There is of course an ethical dimension here as well—certain searches must be continued even if the chances of success seem dismal.

There are times that searches must be continued against extreme odds. There are other times when searches are best given up. Despite Poseidon's wrath, Odysseus was right to continue seeking Ithaca. Sisyphus, on the other hand, should have given up rolling the rock up the hill long ago. We no longer look kindly on angle trisectors and circle squarers. We are amused by purported *perpetuum mobile* devices. We deny the existence of unicorns, gnomes, and fairy godmothers. In these cases we don't just say that the search for these objects is vain; we positively deny that the objects exist. Such denials, such claims that certain searches are vain, such admissions that certain modes of discourse cannot succeed in solving certain problems are widespread, both in and out of science. Along with Steve Meyer I refer to them as *proscriptive generalizations*.

I don't have a precise line of demarcation for deciding when a search is to be given up and when the object of a search is to be denied existence. Nevertheless, I can offer a necessary condition. The failure in practice to discover a thing is good reason to doubt the thing's existence *only if* a diligent search for the thing has been performed. A full and efficient use of our empirical and theoretical resources for discovery should be made before we accept a proscriptive generalization. But once this has been done, to suppose that all the gaps in extraordinary explanations must be fillable by natural causes cannot be justified, nor is it the case that one is necessarily blocking the path of inquiry by putting forward a proscriptive generalization which asserts that science shall never fill a certain gap. Not all gaps are created equal. To assume that they are is to presuppose the very thing which is in question, namely, naturalism. ««

The Religious Life of Theological Students

(reprinted from *The Selected Shorter Writings of B. B. Warfield*)

Benjamin B. Warfield

I am asked to speak to you on the religious life of the student of theology. I approach the subject with some trepidation. I think it the most important subject which can engage our thought. You will not suspect me, in saying this, to be depreciating the importance of the intellectual preparation of the student for the ministry. The importance of the intellectual preparation of the student for the ministry is the reason of the existence of our Theological Seminaries. Say what you will, do what you will, the ministry is a "learned profession"; and the man without learning, no matter with what other gifts he may be endowed, is unfit for its duties. But learning, though indispensable, is not the most indispensable thing for the minister. It is only one of a long list of requirements which Paul lays down as necessary to meet in him who aspires to this high office. And all the rest concern, not his intellectual, but his spiritual fitness. A minister must be learned, on pain of being utterly incompetent for his work. But before and above being learned, a minister must be godly.

Nothing could be more fatal, however, than to set things over against one another. Recruiting officers do not dispute whether it is better for soldiers to have a right leg or a left leg: soldiers should have both legs. Sometimes we hear it said that ten minutes on your knees will give you a truer, deeper, more operative knowledge of God than ten hours over your books.

What! is the appropriate response, "than ten hours over your books, on your knees?" Why should you turn from God when you turn to books, or feel that you must turn from your books in order to turn to God? If learning and devotion are as antagonistic as that, then the intellectual life is in itself accursed. That I am asked to speak to you on the religious life of the student of theology proceeds on the recognition of the absurdity of such antitheses. You are students of theology; and, just because you are students of theology, it is understood that you are religious men—of such concern that you will wish above all things, to be warned of the dangers that may assail your religious life, and be pointed to the means by which you may strengthen and enlarge it. In your case there can be no "either—or"—either a student or a man of God. You must be both.

Perhaps the intimacy of the relation between the work of a theological student and his religious life will nevertheless bear some emphasizing. Of course you do not think religion and study incompatible. But it is barely possible that there may be some among you who think of them too much apart—who are inclined to set their studies off to one side, and their religious life off to the other side, and to fancy that what is given to the one is taken from the other. No mistake could be more gross. Religion does not take a man away from his work; it sends him to his work with an added quality of devotion. We sing—do we not?—

Teach me, my God and King
In all things Thee to see

And what I do in anything,
To do it as for thee.
If done t' obey Thy laws,
E'en servile labors shine:
Hallowed is toil, if this is the cause,
The meanest work divine.

It is not just the way George Herbert wrote it. He puts, perhaps, a sharper point on it. He reminds us that a man may look at his work as he looks at a pane of glass—either seeing nothing but the glass, or looking straight through the glass to the wide heavens beyond. And he tells us plainly that there is nothing so mean but that great words, "for thy sake," can glorify it:

A servant, with this clause,
Makes drudgery divine,
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,
Makes that, and the action, fine.

But the doctrine is the same, and it is the doctrine, the fundamental doctrine, of Protestant morality, from which the whole system of Christian ethics unfolds. It is the great doctrine of "vocation," the doctrine, to wit, that the best service we can offer to God is just to do our duty—our plain, homely duty, whatever that may chance be. The Middle Ages did not think so; they cut a cleft between the religious and the secular life, and counseled him who wished to be religious to turn his back on what they called the "world," that is to say, not the wickedness that is in the world—"the world, the flesh and the devil" as we say—but the work-a-day world, that congeries of occupations which forms the daily task of men and women, who perform their duty to themselves and their fellowmen. Protestantism put an end to all that. As Professor Doumergue eloquently puts it, "Then Luther came, and, with still more consistency, Calvin, proclaiming the great idea of 'vocation,' an idea and a word which are found in the languages of all the Protestant peoples—*Beruf, Calling, Vocation*—and which are lacking in the languages of the people of antiquity and of mediaeval culture. 'Vocation'—it is the call of God, addressed to every man, whoever he may be, to lay upon him a particular work, no matter what. And the calls, and therefore also the called, stand on a complete equality with one another. The burgomaster is God's burgomaster; the physician is God's physician; the merchant is God's merchant; the laborer is God's laborer. Every location, liberal, as we call it, or manual, the humblest and the vilest in appearance as truly as the noblest and the most glorious, is of divine right." Talk of the divine right of kings! Here is the divine right of every workman, no one of whom needs to be ashamed, if only he is an honest and good workman. "Only laziness," adds Professor Doumergue, "is ignoble, and while Romanism multiplies its mendicant orders, the Reformation banishes the idle from its towns."

Now as students of theology your vocation is to study theology; and to study it diligently, in accordance with the apostolic injunction: "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord." It is precisely for this that you are students of theology; this is your "next duty," and the neglect of duty is not a fruitful religious exercise. Dr. Charles Hodge, in his delightful autobiographical notes, tells of Philip Lindsay, the most popular professor in the Princeton College of his

day—a man sought by nearly every college in the Central States for its presidency—that “he told our class that we would find that one of the best preparations for death was a through knowledge of the Greek grammar.” “This,” comments Dr. Hodge, in his quaint fashion, “was his way of telling us that we ought to do our duty.” Certainly, every man who aspires to be a religious man must begin his daily work which lies before him to do at this particular time and place. If this work happens to be studying, then his religious life depends on nothing more fundamentally than on just studying. You might as well talk of a father who neglects his parental duties, of a son who fails in all the obligations of filial piety, of an artisan who systematically skimps his work and turns in a bad job, of a workman who is nothing better than an eye-servant, being religious men as of a student as of a student who does not study being a religious man. It cannot be: you cannot build up a religious life except you begin by performing faithfully your simple, daily duties. It is not the question whether you like these duties. You may think of your studies what you please. But you must faithfully give yourselves to your studies, if you wish to be religious men. No religious character can be built up on the foundation of the neglected duty.

There is certainly something wrong with the religious life of a theological student who does not study. But it does not quite follow that therefore everything is right with his religious life if he does study. It is possible—even to study theology—in an entirely secular spirit. I said a little while ago that what religion does is to send a man to his work with an added quality of devotion. In saying that, I meant the word “devotion” to be taken in both its senses—in the sense of “zealous application,” and in the sense of a “religious exercise.” That is what his religion does: it makes one do his duty, do it thoroughly, do it “in the Lord.” But in the case of many branches of study, there is nothing in the topics studied which tends directly to feed the religious life, or to set in movement the religious emotions, or to call out specifically religious reactions. If we study them “in the Lord,” that is only because we do it “for his sake,” on the principle which makes “sweeping a room” an act of worship. With theology it is not so. In all its branches alike, theology has as its unique end to make God known: the student of theology is brought by his daily task into the presence of God, and is kept there. Can a religious

man stand in the presence of God, and not worship? It is possible, I have said, to study even theology in a purely secular spirit. But surely that is possible only for an irreligious man, or at least for an unreligious man. And here I place in your hands at once a touchstone by which you may discern your religious state, and an instrument for

the quickening of your religious life. Do you prosecute your daily tasks as students of theology as “religious exercises”? If you do not, look to yourselves: it is surely not all right with the spiritual condition of that man who can busy himself daily with divine things, with a cold and impassive heart. If you do, rejoice. But in any case, see that you do! And that you do it ever more and more abundantly. Whatever you may have done in the past, for the future make all your theological studies “religious exercises.” This is the great rule for a rich and wholesome religious life in a theological student. Put your heart into your studies; do not merely occupy your mind with them, but put your heart into them. They bring you daily and hourly into the very presence of God; his ways, is dealings with men, the infinite majesty of his Being from their very subject matter. Put the shoes from of your

Charles Hodge on Scripture and Science

As the Bible is of God, it is certain that there can be no conflict between the teachings of the Scriptures and the facts of science. It is not with facts, but with theories, believers have to contend. Many such theories have, from time to time, been presented, apparently or really inconsistent with the Bible. But these theories have either proved to be false, or to harmonize with the Word of God, properly interpreted. The Church has been forced more than once to alter her interpretation of the Bible to accommodate the discoveries of science. But this has been done without doing any violence to the Scriptures or in any degree impairing their authority. Such change, however, cannot be effected without a struggle. It is impossible that our mode of understanding the Bible should not be determined by our views of the subjects of which it treats. So long as men believed that the earth was the centre of our system, the sun its satellite, and the stars its ornamentation, they of necessity understood the Bible in accordance with that hypothesis. But when it was discovered that the earth was only one of the smaller satellites of the sun, and that the stars were worlds, then faith, although at first staggered, soon grew strong enough to take it all in, and rejoice to find that the Bible, and the Bible alone of all ancient books, was in full accord with these stupendous revelations of science.

Systematic Theology

feet in this holy presence!

We are frequently told, indeed, that the great danger of the theological student lies precisely in his constant contact with divine things. They may come to seem common to him, because they are customary. As the average man breathes the air and basks in the sunshine without ever a thought that it is God in his goodness who make the sun to rise on him, though he is evil, and sends rain to him, though he is unjust; so you may come to handle even the furniture of the sanctuary with never a thought above the gross earthly materials of which it is made. The words which tell you of God’s terrible majesty or of his glorious goodness may come to be mere words to you—Hebrew and Greek words, with etymologies, and inflections, and connections in sentences. The reasonings which establish to you the mysteries of his saving activities may come to be to you mere logical paradigms, with premises and conclusions, fitly framed, no doubt, and triumphantly cogent, but with no further significance to you than their formal logical conclusiveness. God’s stately steppings in his redemptive processes may become to you mere series of facts of history, curiously interplaying to the production of social and religious conditions, and pointing mayhap to an issue which

we may shrewdly conjecture: but much like other facts occurring in time and space, which may come to your notice. It is your great danger. But it is your great danger, because it is your great privilege. Think of what your privilege is when your greatest danger is that the great things of religion may become common to you! Other men, oppressed by the hard conditions of life, sunk in daily struggle for bread perhaps, distracted at any rate by the dreadful drag of the world upon them and the awful rush of the world's work, find it hard to get time and opportunity so much as to pause and consider whether there be such things as God, and religion, and salvation from sin that encompasses them about and holds them captive. The very atmosphere of your life is these things; you breathe them in at every pore; they surround you, encompass you, press in upon you from every side. It is all in danger of becoming common to you! God forgive you, you are in danger of becoming weary of God!

Do you know what this danger is? Or, rather, let us turn the question—are you alive to what your privileges are? Are you making full sense of them? Are you, by this constant contract with divine things growing in holiness, becoming every day more and more men of God? If not, you are hardening! And I am here today to warn you to take seriously your theological study, not merely as a duty, done for God's sake and therefore made divine, but as a religious exercise, itself charged with religious blessing to you; fitted by its very nature to fill all your mind and heart and soul and life with divine thoughts and feelings and aspirations and achievements. You will never prosper in your religious life in the Theological Seminary until your work in the Theological Seminary becomes itself to you a religious exercise out of which you draw every day enlargement of heart, elevation of spirit, and adoring delight in your Maker and your Savior.

I am not counseling you, you will observe, to make your theological studies your sole religious exercise. They are religious exercises of the most rewarding kind; and your religious life will very much depend upon your treating them as such. But there are other religious exercises demanding punctual attention which cannot be neglected without the gravest damage to your religious life. I refer particularly now to the stated formal religious meetings of the Seminary. I wish to be perfectly explicit here, and very

emphatic. No man withdraw himself from the stated religious services of the community of which he is a member, without serious injury to his personal religious life. It is not without significance that the apostolic writer couples together the exhortations, "to hold fast the confession of our hope, that it waver not," and "to forsake not the assembling of ourselves together."

Needful as common worship is, however, for men at large it is as nothing compared with its needfulness for a body of young men situated as you are. You are gathered together here for a religious purpose, in preparation for the highest religious service which can be performed by men—the guidance of others in the religious life; and shall you have everything else in common except worship? You are gathered together here, separated from your homes and all that home means; from churches in which you have been brought up, and all that fellowship means; and shall you not yourselves form a religious community, with its own organic religious life and religious expression? I say it deliberately, as you are and must be living, cannot maintain a healthy, full rich religious life individually, unless they are giving organic

expression to their religious life as a community in frequented stated diets of common worship. Nothing can take the place of this common organic worship of the community as a community, its stated seasons, and as a regular function of the corporate life of the community. Without it you cease to be a religious community and lack that support and stay, that excitement and spur, that comes to the individual from the organic life of the community of which he forms apart.

In my own mind, I am quite clear that in an institution like this the whole body of students should come together, both morning and evening, every day, for common prayer; and should join twice on every Sabbath in formal worship. Without at least this much common worship I do not think the institution can preserve its character as a distinctively religious institution—an institution whose institutional life is primarily a religious one. You will observe that I am not merely exhorting you "to go to church." "Going to church" is in any case good. But what I am exhorting you to do is to go to your own church—to give your presence and active religious participation to every stated meeting for worship of the institution as an institution. Thus you will do your part

Is Doctrine Important?

The Apostle Paul[†] certainly thought so. In 1 Timothy 4:16 Paul[†] writes,

Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

[†]Of course we now know that it wasn't actually Paul who wrote first Timothy. The most recent scholarship suggests that the author was actually Paul's live-in mistress, who accompanied Paul on his missionary journeys to North Africa—missionary journeys which the biblical records unfortunately omit. This information has been pieced together from the Acts of Priscilla, a recently discovered papyrus found on the Island of Corfu. According to this text the name of Paul's mistress was Junia. Apparently Junia was the cousin of the Priscilla mentioned in Acts. Junia was also a vegetarian, and displayed some leanings that nowadays could be construed as environmentalist. The verdict is still out whether Junia constituted Paul's thorn in the flesh. For more information on this fascinating discovery, please consult Frieda Witzbeutel, "Die Junia des Paulus," *Zeitschrift Für Neutestamentlicher Unsinn*, 1994, 15, pp. 32-47.

to give to the institution as organic religious life, and you will draw out from the organic religious life of the institution a support and inspiration for your own personal religious life which you can get nowhere else, and which you cannot afford to miss—if, that is, you have a care to your religious quickening growth. To be an active member of a living religious body is the condition of the healthy religious functioning.

I trust you will not tell me the stated religious exercises of the Seminary are too numerous, or are wearying. That would only be to betray the low ebb of your won religious vitality. The feet of him whose heart is warm with religious feeling turn of themselves to the sanctuary, and carry him with joyful steps to the house of prayer. I am told that there are some students who do not find themselves in a prayerful mood in the early hours of a winter morning; and are much too tired at the close of a hard day's work to pray, and therefore do not find it profitable to attend prayers in the late afternoon: who think the preaching at the regular service on Sabbath morning dull and uninteresting, and who do not find Christ at the Sabbath afternoon conference. Such things I seem to have heard before; and yours will be an exceptional pastorate, if you do not hear something very like them, before you have been in a pastorate six months. Such things meet you every day on the street; they are ordinary expression of the heart which is dulled or is dulling to the religious appeal. They are not hopeful symptoms among those whose life should be lived on the religious heights. No doubt, those who minister to you in spiritual things should take them to heart. And you who are ministered to must take them to heart, too. And let me tell you straightout that the preaching you find dull will no more seem dull to you if faithfully obey the Master's precept: "Take heed how ye hear"; that if you do not find Christ in the conference room it is because you do not take him there with you; that, if after an ordinary day's work you are too weary to unite with your fellows in closing the day with common prayer, it is because the impulse to prayer is weak in your heart. If there is no fire in the pulpit it falls to you to kindle it in the pews. No man can fail to meet with God in the sanctuary if he takes God there with him.

How easy it is to roll the blame of our cold hearts over upon the shoulders of our religious leaders! It is refreshing to observe Luther, with his breezy good sense, dealt with complaints of lack of attractiveness in his evangelical preachers. He had not sent them out to please people, he said, and their function was not to interest or entertain; their function was to teach the saving truth of God, and, if they did that, it was frivolous for people in danger of perishing for want of the truth to object to the vessel in which it was

offered to them. When the people of Torgau, for instance, wished to dismiss their pastors, because, they said, their voices were too weak to fill the churches, Luther simply responded, "That's an old song: better have some difficulty in hearing the Gospel than no difficulty at all in hearing what is very far from the Gospel."

"People cannot have their ministers exactly as they wish," he declares again, "they should thank God for the pure word," and not demand St. Augustine and St. Ambrose to preach it to them. If a pastor pleases the Lord Jesus and is faithful to him—there is none so great and mighty but he ought to be pleased with him, too. The point, you see, is that men who are hungry for the truth and get it ought not to be exigent as to the platter in which it is served to them. And they will not be.

But why should we appeal to Luther? Have we not the example of our Lord Jesus Christ? Are we better than he? Surely, if ever there was one who might justly plead that the

False ideas are the greatest obstacles to the gospel. We may preach with all the fervor of a reformer and yet succeed only in winning a straggler here and there, if we permit the whole collective thought of the nation or of the world to be controlled by ideas which, by the resistless force of logic, prevent Christianity from being regarded as anything more than a harmless delusion.

—J. Gresham Machen

common worship of the community had nothing to offer him it was the Lord Jesus Christ. But every Sabbath found him seated in his place among the worshipping people, and there was no act of stated worship which he felt himself entitled to discard. Even in his most exalted mood, and after his most elevating experiences, he quietly took his place with the rest of God's people,

sharing with them in the common worship of the community. Returning from that great baptismal scene, when the heavens themselves were rent to bear him witness that he was well pleased to God; from the searching trials of the wilderness, and from that first great tour in Galilee, prosecuted, as we are expressly told, "in the power of the Spirit"; he came back, as the record tells, "to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and"—so proceeds the amazing narrative—he entered as his customary was, into the synagogue, on the Sabbath day." "As his custom was!" Jesus Christ made it his habitual practice to be found in his place on the Sabbath day at the stated place worship to which he belonged. "It is a reminder," as Sir William Robertson Nicoll well insists, "of the truth which, in our fancied spirituality, we are apt to forget—that the holiest personal life can scarcely afford to dispense with the stated forms of the church, for all its local imperfections and dullness, is a divine provision for sustaining the individual soul." We cannot afford to wiser than our Lord in this matter. Is it necessary for me to exhort those who would fain be like Christ, to see to it that they are imitators of him in this?

But not even with the most assiduous use of the corporate expressions of the religious life of the community have you reached the foundation-stone of your piety. That is

to be found, of course, in your closets, or rather in your hearts, in your private religious exercises, and in your intimate religious aspirations. You are here as theological students; and if you would be religious men you must do your duty as theological students; you must find daily nourishment for your religious life in your theological studies; you must enter fully into the organic religious life of the community of which you form a part. But to do all this you must keep the fires of religious life burning brightly in your heart; in the inmost core of your being, you must be men of God. Time would fail me, if I undertook to outline with any fullness the method of the devout life. One hint I may give you, particularly adapted to you as students for the ministry: Keep always before your mind the greatness of your calling, that is to say two things: the immensity of the task before you, the infinitude of the resources at your disposal. I think it has not been idly said, that if we face the tremendous difficulty of the work before us, it will certainly throw us back on our knees; and if we worthily gauge the power of the Gospel committed to us, that will certainly keep us on our knees. I am led to single out this particular consideration, because it seems to me that we have fallen upon an age in which we very greatly need to recall ourselves to the seriousness of life and its issues, and to the seriousness of our calling as ministers to life. In a time like this, it is perhaps not strange that careful observers of the life of Theological Seminaries tell us that the most noticeable thing about it is certain falling off from the intense seriousness of outlook by which students of theology were formerly characterized. Let us hope it is not true. If it were true, it would be a great evil. I would call you back to this seriousness of outlook, and bid you cultivate it, if you would be men of God now, and ministers who need not be ashamed hereafter. Think of the greatness of the minister's calling; the greatness of the issues which hang on your worthiness or your unworthiness for its high functions; and determine once and for all that with God's help you will be worthy. "God had but one Son," says Thomas Goodwin, "and he made him a minister." "None but he who made the world," says John Newton, "can make a minister"—that is, a minister who is worthy.

You can, of course, be a minister of a sort, and not be God-made. You can go through the motions of the work, and shall not say that your work will be in vain—for God is good and who knows by what instruments he may work his will of good men? Helen Jackson pictures far too common an experience when she paints the despair of one whose sowing, though not unfruitful for others, bears no harvest in his own soul.

O teacher, then I said, thy years,
Are they not joy? each word that issueth
From out thy lips, doth it return to bless
Thine own heart manyfold?

Listen to the response:

I starve with hunger treading out their corn,
I die of travail while their souls are born.

She does not mean it quite the evil part in which I am reading it. But what does Paul mean when he utters that terrible warning: "Lest when I have preached to others, I myself should be castaway?" And there is an even more

dreadful contingency. It is our Savior himself who tells us that it is possible to compass the sea and land to make one proselyte, and when we have made him to make him twofold more a child of hell than we are ourselves. And will we not be in awful peril of making our proselytes children of hell if we are not ourselves of heaven? Even the physical waters will not rise above their source: the spiritual floods are even less tractable to our commands. There is no mistake more terrible than to suppose that activity in Christian work can take place of depth of Christian affections.

This is the reason why many good men are shaking their heads a little today over a tendency which they fancy they see increasing among our younger Christian workers to restless activity at the apparent expense of depth of spiritual culture.

Activity, of course, is good: surely in the cause of the Lord we should run and not be weary. But not when it is substituted for inner religious strength. We cannot get along without our Marthas. But what shall we do when, through all the length and breadth of the land, we shall search in vain for a Mary? Of course the Marys will be as little admired by the Marthas today as of yore. "Lord," cried Martha, "dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?" And from that time to this the cry has continually gone up against the Marys that they waste the precious ointment which might have been given to the poor, when they pour it out to God, and are idle when they sit at the Master's feet. A minister, high in the esteem of the churches, is even quoted as declaring—not confessing mind you, but publishing abroad as something in which he gloried—that he has long since ceased to pray; he *works*. "Work and pray" is no longer, it seems, to be the motto of at least ministerial life. It is to be all work and no praying; the only prayer that is prevailing, we are told, with the same cynicism with which we are told that God is on the side of the largest battalions—is just work. You will say this is an extreme case. Thank God, it is. But in the tendencies of our modern life, which all make for ceaseless—I had almost said thoughtless—activity, have a care that it does not become your case; or that your case—even now—may not have at least some resemblance to it. Do you pray? How much do you pray? How much do you love to pray? What takes place in your life does the "still hour," alone with God, take?

I am sure that if you once get a true glimpse of what the ministry of the cross is, for which you are preparing, you will pray, Lord, who is sufficient for these things, your heart will cry; and your whole soul will be wrung with the petition: Lord, make me sufficient for these things. Old Cotton Mather wrote a great little book once, to serve as a guide to students for the ministry. The not very happy title which he gave it is *Manductio ad Ministerium*. But by a stroke of genius he added a sub-title which is more significant. And this is the sub-title he added: *The angels preparing to sound the trumpets*. That is what Cotton Mather calls you, students for the ministry: the angels, preparing to sound the trumpets! Take the name to yourselves, and live up to it. Give your days and nights to living up to it! And then, perhaps, when you come to sound the trumpets the note will be pure and clear and strong, and perchance may pierce even to the grave and wake the dead. ««

The Price of Heresy

In 1843, Mr. James Lenox of New York donated the first library building, the Lenox Library, and the five acres on which it stood (and the current libraries now stand) to Princeton Theological Seminary. The deed transferring title to the seminary dated May 5, 1843 expressed the theological convictions of its faculty, directors, and supporters:

PROVIDED ALWAYS AND NEVERTHELESS and upon this condition that if at any time or times hereafter the said parties of the second part [Princeton Seminary] shall pass from under the supervision and control of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America now commonly known and distinguished as the Old School General Assembly and its successors, or if at any time or times hereafter the leading doctrines declared as the confession of faith, and catechisms of the Presbyterian Church, such as the doctrines of universal and total depravity, the doctrine of election, the doctrine of the atonement, the doctrines of the imputation of Adam's sin to all his posterity and of the imputation of Christ's righteousness to all his people for their justification, the doctrine of human inability and the doctrine of the necessity of the influence of the Holy Spirit in the regeneration, conversion, and sanctification of sinners, as these doctrines are now understood and explained by the aforesaid Old School General Assembly, shall cease to be taught and inculcated in the said Seminary, then and in either case the Grant and Conveyance, hereby made, shall cease and BECOME NULL AND VOID.

Apologetics Seminar at Princeton Seminary

The Charles Hodge Society will continue to sponsor its Apologetics Seminar next academic year. The topic of the Apologetics Seminar this coming fall will be "What is the Word of God?" The seminar will meet Tuesdays at 8:00 p.m. in Stuart Hall. See you there!

Q. 3 What is the Word of God?

A. 3 The holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, the only rule of faith and obedience.

—*The Westminster Larger Catechism*

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